

avian stem at a time when as yet the metatarsal bones formed distinct and independent entities in the members of the entire class of birds."

Nineteen admirably executed plates illustrate this excellent memoir.

XII.—*Letters, Announcements, &c.*

We have received the following letters addressed to the Editors of 'The Ibis':—

6 Oxford and Cambridge Mansions,
12th November, 1883.

SIRS,—No one who has perused the last Journal of the late W. A. Forbes, which is published in 'The Ibis' for October, can fail to admire the spirit with which, in spite of failing health, he attempted to carry out the project he had in view, and his devotion to the last to the cause of Ornithology. Nor will any one deny that the proposal made by Capt. Shelley in the same number of 'The Ibis,' to rename a species which Mr. Forbes procured on the Niger, *Ægialitis forbesi*, is a well-deserved tribute to his memory, although I am one of those who think that the practice of naming species after individuals is now-a-days far too common.

Circumstances which I need not here detail, led me to describe the same species in 'The Zoologist' for October, and to propose for it the name of *Ægialitis nigris*. On reflection, I think that I should have done better had I stated that I believed Capt. Shelley had proposed to call it *Ægialitis forbesi*, and had expressed my concurrence in that course.

Under the circumstances I propose that the name suggested by me should be treated as a synonym, and that the species should stand as *Ægialitis forbesi*, Shelley.

I am, &c.,

J. E. HARTING.

74 Jernyn Street, St. James's,
November 16th, 1883.

SIRS,—Happening to be at Turin on Wednesday, the 31st

of October last, I went to the shop of Signor Bonomi, the naturalist, of 7 Via Lagrange, who told me that a bird unknown to him had been brought in on the previous day by a *chasseur*, who said he had shot it near Turin, and who wanted it arranged to adorn the hat of his *inamorata*. Bonomi produced the bird in the flesh : I at once saw that it was a fine specimen of the "Yellow-billed American Cuckoo," *Coccyzus americanus* (Linn.). I was of course much interested in the discovery ; for this species has never before been known to occur in Italy, though an example of its near relation, *Coccyzus erythrophthalmus* (Wils.), was shot near Lucca in 1858 and is now in the museum of Pisa.

Anxious to rescue this unique Italian specimen of the species from the ignominious fate in store for it (for I hold that the basest use to which a rare bird can be put is to be stuck on a woman's hat), I offered Bonomi 10 francs for the bird, and told him to suggest to the young man that a Kingfisher, a Golden Oriole, or some bright-plumaged exotic bird would make far more show in the young person's hat. He promised to do so, and seemed to have no doubt as to the success of the proposed arrangement. I called on the following day, and saw the bird skinned and nicely made up ; but I was not able to carry off the prize, as the owner had not again been to the shop. I accordingly returned next morning, when Bonomi told me that the *chasseur* would not give up the bird for any consideration or at any price, saying that he had shown it to his young woman and promised it to her for her hat, and that therefore she must have that very bird and no other ; and that he had, in fact, taken it away with him. I then wrote and told Professor Giglioli of Florence all about it, and went and found Count Salvadori of Turin, and took him to Bonomi's shop, and so put him on the scent. Have these gentlemen been more successful than I was ? *Chi lo sa* ? I hope so ; for if not, this unique Italian specimen of *Coccyzus americanus* still adorns the hat of the *inamorata* of the Turin *chasseur*.

Yours &c.,

E. CAVENDISH TAYLOR.

Turin Zoological Museum,
November 23rd, 1883.

SIRS,—I think it will interest the readers of 'The Ibis' to know that a living pair, fully adult, of the recently described *Struthio molybdophanes* is in the aviary of Dr. Monaco, in Turin. The owner bought them in Antwerp last September. The female has grey feathers, like that sex of *S. camelus*.

I am, Yours &c.,

T. SALVADORI.

[This supposed new species of Ostrich has, as we are informed, been described in a recent number of a periodical which has not yet reached this country, the principal distinction, we believe, being that the naked portions of the body are lead-coloured instead of red. Similar Ostriches are in the Jardin d'Acclimatation at Paris, and one was recently in the Zoological Society's Gardens in the Regent's park. The existence of this form has long been known to us, but we should never have thought of making a "new species" out of it.—EDD.]

Topelyffe Grange,
Farnborough, Beckenham, Kent.
December 13, 1883.

SIRS,—Mr. Seebohm, who, in his 'History of British Birds,' complains so feelingly of the "slipshod" way in which ornithological work has been of late done by himself and others, furnishes in that book (vol. ii. p. 286, note) a telling example of the truth of his complaint by his synonymical treatment of certain Shore-Larks. He prefaces his remarks (which are written in the spirit that commonly pervades his criticisms of the authors on whose labours his own book is based) as follows:—"Dresser, in his 'Birds of Europe,' has so confused the synonymy of the Asiatic species and races of Shore-Larks that I have had some considerable difficulty in disentangling the skein;" and, rushing in where more cautious ornithologists have feared to tread, rashly identifies Gould's *Otocorys longirostris* with the small pale Shore-Lark to which I, in my work on European Birds

(iv. p. 401), gave the name *Otocorys brandti*. I have now before me the type of my species, as well as 'The Ibis' for 1881, in which Mr. Scully has given a figure (p. 581) of the head of *O. longirostris*; and no unbiassed ornithologist can for a moment doubt that Mr. Seebohm has made an egregious "blunder" in uniting these two birds, as will easily be seen by the following comparison of their characters:—

OTOCORYS BRANDTI.

Decidedly smaller than *O. penicillata*.

A conspicuous black capistral band, as broad as in many adult males of *O. penicillata*.

The black patch on the side of the neck separated from the black gorget by a very narrow white band, not an eighth of an inch in width.

Bill short and stout.

Whole length 6·5 inches; wing 4·4; tail 3·3; tarsus ·82; bill from gape ·62.

OTOCORYS LONGIROSTRIS.

Decidedly larger than *O. penicillata*.

No black on the capistrum.

The black patch on the side of the neck separated from the black gorget by a broad white band a quarter of an inch in width.

Bill long and (judging from the figure) rather slender than stout.

Whole length 8·25 to 8·5 inches; wing 4·93 to 5·2; tail 3·6 to 3·75; tarsus ·92 to ·95; bill from gape ·8 to ·82.

Mr. Scully does not state whether in coloration *Otocorys longirostris* is as dark as *O. penicillata*, or is, like *O. brandti*, remarkable for the extremely pale tinge of its plumage. From this fact I infer that *O. longirostris* does not differ much in plumage from *O. penicillata*.

I am so averse to entering upon controversy that I should have followed my practice of leaving unnoticed the hostile comments of Mr. Seebohm, were it not that in the interests of science it would be wrong for me to allow an error of this kind to pass unchallenged. Surely a writer, who apparently affects the character of an ornithological critic with a special vocation to point out and supply the shortcomings of all his predecessors, should be a little more careful, and should compare specimens before committing himself to print.

That I was in error in referring *O. longirostris* to *O. peni-*

cillata I freely own—that is, if, as I suppose to be the case, the bird figured by Mr. Scully be really *Otocorys longirostris* of Gould; but it will be seen by my article that when I was writing in 1874, I could not, with the materials at my command, speak with certainty. Since that time so much has come to light that there is no excuse for Mr. Seebohm's further complicating matters by a "blunder" which can arise from carelessness only.

Yours &c.,

H. E. DRESSER.

Liège, 7 Décembre, 1883.

MESSIEURS,—J'ai reçu avec une grande satisfaction le volume 'A List of British Birds' que votre Comité a eu la gracieuseté de m'envoyer.

Je l'ai étudié le jour même de sa réception avec le plus grand empressement, car les ornithologistes distingués qui l'ont élaboré donnent à ce livre une grande valeur.

J'ai été particulièrement heureux de voir la distinction qui est faite entre les espèces erratiques positivement observées dans la Grande Bretagne et celles dont l'indication dans votre pays est douteuse ou même positivement erronée. Un tel travail était très désirable.

Je me permets de vous soumettre quelques observations très courtes sur un petit nombre de points, *currente calamo*.

Je remarque que la 'List' énumère comme espèces des formes qui me semblent peu distinctes, p. e. :—*Pari britannicus* et *ater*, *Acredulæ rosea* et *caudata*, *Cincli melanogaster* et *aquaticus*, *Motacillæ lugubris* et *alba* et quelques autres encore.

Ayant vu à Heligoland, chez Mr. Gätke, le *Loxia* que vous citez comme *L. leucoptera*, il m'a paru que c'est la forme de l'ancien continent (palæarctique) si nommée *bifasciata* et non le *L. leucoptera* américain. Je crois du reste que ces deux formes ne sont pas spécifiquement distinctes.

En lisant le nom de *Chen albatrus* je regrette qu'il n'y ait pas une note explicative sur les divers exemplaires de *Chen* observés en Europe, et que l'on donne généralement comme

Chen hyperboreus. Dans les collections je n'ai pas encore vu des exemplaires européens blancs d'*hyperboreus*, mais seulement des exemplaires ressemblant à la description ancienne de *cærulescens*. Une vérification de cet exemplaire tué en Europe, notamment en Orient, serait fort intéressante.

Je ne sais pas pourquoi le nom d'*arundinacea* (*Turdus arundinaceus*, Linné) est supprimé pour *Acrocephalus turdoides*, puisque vous ne l'adoptez pas non plus (ex Gmel.) pour l'*Acrocephalus streperus*.

Je fais la même observation pour *Sterna hirundo*, Linné, qui n'est pas cité.

Mais je n'attache pas grande importance à ces remarques, qui ne diminuent nullement la grande importance de votre travail, et que je ne fais qu'à titre de simple conversation.

Agréez &c.,

E. DE SELYS-LONGCHAMPS.

Forbes's Final Idea as to the Classification of Birds.

[At the end of Forbes's Journal, written in pencil, dated only *four* days before his death.]

"My final idea as to the classification of birds.—W. A. F., 10.1.83."

Superorder ODONTORNITHES.

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| I. Saururæ. 1. | III. Odontolgæ. 1. |
| II. Odontotornæ. 1. | |

Superorder RHYNCHORNITHES.

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| IV. Struthiones. 1. | XVI. Impennes. 1. |
| V. Apteryges. 1. | XVII. Tubinares. 2. |
| VI. Rheæ. 1. | XVIII. Pseudogryphi. 1. |
| VII. Crypturi. 1. | XIX. Herodiones. 3. |
| VIII. Gallinæ. 3. | XX. Accipitres. 1. |
| IX. Opisthocomi. 1. | XXI. Steganopodes. 3. |
| X. Palamedeæ. 1. | XXII. Pluviales. 8. |
| XI. Eudromades (a). 7. | XXIII. Columbæ. 2. |
| ? Odontoglossæ. | XXIV. Todiformes. 1. |
| XII. Semigallinæ. 2. | XXV. Piciformes (c). 7. |
| XIII. Psittaci. 1. | XXVI. Coraciiformes. 2. |
| XIV. Lamellirostres. 1. | XXVII. Meropiformes. 8. |
| XV. Eretopodes (b). 3. | XXVIII. Passeres. |

(a) EUDROMADES.

Rallidæ.
 Psophiidæ.
 Œdicnemidæ.
 Otididæ.
 Cariamidæ.
 Serpentariidæ.
 Phœnicopteridæ.

(b) ERETOPODES.

Colymbidæ.
 Podicipitidæ.
 Heliornithidæ.

(c) PICIFORMES.

Picidæ.	{	Suborder <i>Pici</i> .
Capitonidæ.		
Bucerotidæ.	{	Subord. <i>Halcyones</i> .
Upupidæ.		
(Irrisoridæ ?)		
Alcedinidæ.		
Coliidæ.	{	
Momotidæ.		

[The numbers after the orders evidently denote the number of families comprised in each order.—EDD.]

The New Bird-Gallery at South Kensington.—The mounted collection of birds of the British Museum has now been transferred to South Kensington and arranged in the large gallery on the ground-floor to the left on entering the building, below that occupied by the Mammals. The main series of birds occupies 44 cases to the right and left of the central gangway, while the Struthionies and Tinami have been allotted to the large chamber at the end, where the Gould collection of Humming-birds has been likewise placed. The series of birds begins with the Accipitres to the left as one enters, and returning on the north side, concludes with the Penguins on the right. The arrangement of much of the collection can at present be regarded only as provisional, for in many instances representatives of very different natural families are mixed up together, as, we trust, will not ultimately be the case. But it cannot of course be expected that, in the transfer of such an enormous collection, every specimen can fall into its proper place at once. There can, however, be no question that, when reduced into proper order and accurately labelled, the series in the new Bird-gallery will be the finest in Europe, and will give even the casual visitor a grand idea of the extent and variety of the great class Aves.

The U.S. National Museum.—The recently issued Report of the Smithsonian Institution for 1881 contains the following account of the progress made in that year with the collection of birds:—

“In the department of birds there have been seventy-four accession lots. Under the direction of Mr. Robert Ridgway there has been much activity in this department in reorganizing the exhibition series of specimens and in eliminating duplicates from the storage series. There have been 4345 entries in the catalogue. The removal of the mammals and skeletons to the new building will give an opportunity for a much more satisfactory exhibition of the ornithological collections.

“The most important addition has been Mr. Ridgway’s private collection of American birds, containing 2302 specimens of 778 species, especially important because the specimens have been selected in the field to illustrate variations of colour and form due to age, sex, and geographical location. In addition to numerous small collections, others of special interest have been received of the birds of Mexico and Yucatan from A. Boucard, of Paris; of Surinam from C. J. Hering, of Paramaribo; of Grenada from J. G. Wells, of Saint Andrews; of Guatemala from L. Guesde; of Dominica from Dr. H. A. Nichols; of Costa Rica from J. C. Zeledon; of Japan from Dr. F. C. Dale, U.S.N.; of Florida from Messrs. J. Bell and S. T. Walker; of Wyoming from Charles Ruby; of Indiana from Mr. Ridgway; and of Illinois from Mr. L. M. Turner.

“Mr. Ridgway gives the following census of the bird collection:—

Reserve series:

Mounted specimens	7,000
Skins	40,000
Total reserve	47,000
Duplicates	8,000
Total	55,000

The National Museum of Lisbon.—Our excellent correspondent Prof. J. V. Barboza du Bocage, having accepted office in the present Portuguese Government, has, for the present, given up the Directorship of the Zoological Section of the National Museum of Lisbon (to which institution he has, as we all know, for a long period devoted much time and attention) to Dr. Fernando Mattroso. The Museum, which I have lately had the pleasure of visiting under Prof. Bocage's guidance, occupies a series of five rooms in the Escola Polytechnica at Lisbon. The ornithological portion is divided into three sections: (1) the general series, (2) the native birds of Portugal, (3) the birds of the Portuguese colonies in West Africa. The last is the most important, as containing the specimens described in Prof. Bocage's lately finished work on the Birds of Angola. It contains representatives of about 600 species, partly mounted and partly in skin. Amongst some of the most prominent of these may be mentioned examples of *Stactolæma anchietæ*, *Elminia albicauda*, *Neocichla gutturalis*, *Hylypsornis salvadorii*, *Sharpia angolensis*, *Penthetria bocagii*, *Ardea calceolata*, and *Pelecanus sharpii*, many of which are the original types. In the Portuguese local series is a fine example of *Saxicola leucura* from near Coimbra, not hitherto generally known to occur so far west in Europe. In the general collection is a fine stuffed specimen of *Alca impennis*, presented by King Victor Emmanuel to his son-in-law, the present King of Portugal, in 1867, and an egg of the same bird, lately discovered among the débris of the old collections of the Museum. Senhor J. A. de Sousa, the present Custos of the Zoological Section of the Lisbon Museum, is an accomplished ornithologist, and has a new list of the birds of Portugal in preparation.—P. L. SCLATER.

Bird-Notes from Mr. Layard (Brit. Cons. Nouméa, New Caledonia, Sept. 2nd, 1883).—"You ask for bird-news. Alas, I have none! I can't skin any more, as my left hand is stiffening. I have not seen a bird for months, except sparrows. I heard from Norfolk Island last week. My correspondent has found the *Gygis candida* breeding there, laying on the

bare branch, as has been described; he sends eggs, which some day I shall send to Tristram. Also an egg which I really think is that of *Nestor productus*!! It was found on Nepean Island, and is quite unknown to the Norfolk islanders. I certainly think it is that egg. What else can it be? He sends to me for identification the skin of *Chrysococcyx lucidus*, not hitherto recorded from that island. The 'great Snipe' of the island turns out to be *Limosa novæ-zealandiæ*, and the 'little Snipe' *Charadrius xanthocheilus*. The 'Sitterack' is *Anous leucocapillus*. He has sent a *Zosterops* in alcohol, all *bright yellow*. This phase of plumage is not very uncommon. Is it not the result of breeding in and in? *Fresh blood* would never reach their small island. I have asked him to investigate the breeding of the Petrels, and if they vary with sex or age. This is all I can do in the bird line."

New Works in Progress.—The next two volumes of the 'British Museum Catalogue of Birds' to be published will contain the Cinnyrimorphæ (families Nectariniidæ and Meliphagidæ) by Dr. Gadow, and the Dicæidæ, Hirundinidæ, Motacillidæ, Mniotiltidæ, and Ampelidæ by Mr. Sharpe. The former of these is nearly through the press.

Mr. Salvin has most of the plates drawn for a monograph of the Petrels (Tubinares), to which group, as we all know, he has for some years devoted special attention.

Dr. Buller, we understand, has in contemplation a new work on the Birds of New Zealand, to be illustrated by coloured figures of all the species, and has invited Mr. Keulemans to run over and do the drawings for him!

Mr. R. Wardlaw-Ramsay is preparing a catalogue of the magnificent collection bequeathed to him by the late Lord Tweeddale.

Capt. Shelley has in contemplation a list of the described species of African birds.

Mr. H. E. Dresser is projecting a monograph of the Rollers (Coraciidæ) as a companion to his nearly ready volume on the Bee-eaters (Meropidæ), of which the prospectus is now before us.

Rare Birds in Andalusia.—Lord Lilford writes :—" It may interest you to hear that I have lately received a pair of *Cursorius gallicus*, which were killed in the Marisma de Lebrija, not far above San Lucar de Barrameda, on 20th August ult. These are the first that I have received from Spain, though the bird has been now and then met with near Malaga. I also received three good skins of *Hydrochelidon leucoptera* from the Coto de Doñana, on the other side of the Guadalquivir. Neither Irby nor I ever obtained this bird from Andalusia before. I believe that it has been met with at Valencia, or rather at the Albufera, about seven miles from that town; but the Guadalquivir is very far west for this eastern species."

The Birds of the Bonin Islands.—The Bonin group of islands, which lie north of the Carolines and some 500 miles S.E. of Japan, seem to have been entirely neglected by naturalists since they were visited in 1828 by F. H. v. Kittlitz. Kittlitz tells us that he met with fifteen species of birds in the Bonin Islands, besides ascertaining the existence of nine or ten others. In his memoir ('Ueber die Vögel der Inselgruppe von Bonin-sima,' Mém. prés. Acad. Sc. St. Pétersbourg, i. p. 231, 1831) he describes and figures several remarkable and little-known species (*Iaxos familiaris*, *Sylvia diphone*, *Fringilla papa*, *Oriolus squamiceps*) peculiar to the group. The Bonin Islands being now Japanese territory and of easy access, we trust that some of our fellow-workers in Japan will not overlook this outlying part of their field of operations. A fresh investigation of this remote group would supply specimens of species scarcely known to us, and probably lead to the discovery of others new to science.

Dr. Fischer's East-African Collections.—Dr. G. A. Fischer (of whose expedition we spoke in our last issue, 'Ibis,' 1883, p. 583) has returned to Berlin with his collections from the Masai country and the base of Kilima-ndjaro. There are said to be about thirty species of birds new to science in the series, and amongst them the finest Touracou (*Corythaix*) yet discovered. A special meeting of the Deutsche Ornithologische Gesellschaft has been held to do him honour.